

OFFICE OF ADULT SERVICES  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)  
IN- HOME AIDE SERVICES  
SSA/IHA-09-001-S

**QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES FROM PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE**

Question 1: Do we have to be MBE?

**Response: No.**

Question 2: Do we have to have three references even though we have two clients right now? (mom and daughter)

**Response: Yes. See Section 4.7. The bidder must supply 3 reference letters (from current or previous customers) to support the Bid.**

Question 3: What to put if some of the things on the checklist we don't have because we are a new company?

**Response: You need to state what things are missing on the checklist and give a reason. Failure to comply with any mandatory requirement will normally disqualify a vendor's Bid.**

Question 4: Our company does not have "employees" who do our care providing services; we hire contractors. Are we still eligible to bid for this contract? Section III Specifications; page 23 states in bold: **"Please note that Bidders are prohibited from subcontracting the direct in-home aid services provided to client. MBE subcontracting would primarily be in the area of medical supplies, advertising, background check, printing, copying, etc"**.

**Response: The prospective bidders cannot sub-contract their home care services to another vendor. The nurses and their aides must be employees of the contractor.**

Question 5: Do we have to accept Medicare and Medicaid?

**Response:** See IFB, Section 2.17 Payment Terms.

Question 6: We just registered on eMaryland Marketplace – are we still eligible?

**Response:** Yes. The requirement is that all bidders must be an active member of eMaryland at the time the contract is awarded.

Question 7: As a company we are not MBE certified yet will that be a problem?

**Response:** Yes, if you intend being a MBE subcontractor. No, if you Intend being the Prime Contractor.

Question 8: As a company we are a minority owned doe we need MBE certified subcontractors? (we have employees)

**Response:** Yes, effective July 1, 2001, as a minority owned business State Certified MBE's must be used as MBE subcontractors to meet the MBE GOAL. You may use the Maryland Department of Transportation MBE directory to obtain a list of State certified MBE's in a variety of areas that may be used for subcontracting. The Maryland Department of Transportation website is [www.mdot.state.md.us](http://www.mdot.state.md.us) click minority/disadvantaged business enterprise, click MBE directory. See also IFB Section 2.28, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, 1<sup>st</sup> bullet.

Question 9: What does the term addenda mean on my paper work?

**Response:** Something added or changed to the IFB.

Question 10: How do I determine project # on Attachment H?

**Response:** Use the Agency Control Number on the IFB cover sheet. Which is SSA/IHAS-09-001-1.

Question 11: On the transmittal page what would be my addenda #, I never received one?

**Response:** All addenda or amendments, if any, to the IFB are posted on eMaryland Marketplace or DHR webpage at [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us). And are numbered "Addenda #1" as changes are made to the IFB or its Attachments – for example Addenda #1 indicates it is the 1<sup>st</sup> change to the IFB.

Question 12: Do I need to have MBE participation being owned by 100% African American and 50% women owned?

**Response:** See response to number 8 above.

Question 13: Do I need MBE subcontractors to submit my bid?

**Response:** Yes, see response to number 8 above. Unless you request a Waiver- see IFB Section 2.29.C and F.

Question 14: Section 4.5 Statement & Qualification, it states in bold lettering **(note: any professional licenses, certificates, etc. required of the Bidder and staff must be included here.)** Section 4.6 Personnel, this is about job descriptions and Individual resumes for the personnel who are to be assigned to this project if the Bidder is awarded the Contract. Do these two statements apply to the CNA's that will be performing personal care, chore, respite care in the home as well as the Project Manager and other key personnel? Could you please define Key Personnel?

**Response:** See section 4.5 Statement of Bidder's Qualifications and Section 4.6 Personnel. Key Personnel is any one who is essential in performing the services of this solicitation.

Question 15: Attachment H. At the top of the form it asks for the total contract amount. Later in the form it asks for the total dollar amount for each MBE subcontractor. Since this contract does not have a set dollar amount, what do we put on the form for these blanks?

**Response:** The total contract amount should remain blank. Enter the percentage applied to each State certified MBE subcontractor, type of work to be performed, project commitment and completion date, minority firm name, address and telephone number, FEIN or SSN number, MBE certification number.

Question 16: We have a contract with Baltimore County Office of Aging. Do we need to document that in this bid?

**Response:** Yes, see Section 4.8.

Question 17: We are not a minority company or non-profit. On the required Attachments F, G and H. Can we apply?

**Response:** Yes.

Question 18: Where is it documented by MDOT that a company cannot be both the prime and sub-recipient vendor when applying/bidding

on contracts; especially since MDOT has certified both entities?

**Response:** **See response to number 8 above. Also IFB Section 2.28, Paragraph 3, the 1<sup>st</sup> bullet.**

Question 19: As a State agency requesting MBE participation for contracts. Does DHR not require its agencies/jurisdictions to request the same when soliciting vendors? Yes/No Why/Why not?

**Response:** **This question does not relate to the IFB, and does not require an answer.**

Question 20: Financial requirements, would tax returns be acceptable for audited financial statements? We are a small successful company, but have never had a financial audit completed.

**Response:** **Yes**

Question 21: Can we have a sample of the completed Attachment A.2 (cost Sheet) from the incumbents?

**Response:** **The current cost sheet has been modified. To receive the cost sheet from the incumbents we would need a written PIA (Public Information Act) request.**

Question 22: Resumes for people assigned to this RFP, does this include the clinical/nursing staff or just management?

**Response:** **Yes, see response to number 14 above..**

Question 23: We have three letters of reference from long-standing hospital staffing clients. Are these acceptable?

**Response:** **References must be from current or previous customers.**

Question 24: All reference letters should be in sealed envelopes. Should they be mailed separately from the bid? Are they supposed to be mailed directly from the reference writers?

**Response:** **Reference letters may be sent directly to the Procurement Officer from the reference source, or submitted by the reference source directly to the Bidder in a separately sealed envelope for inclusion with the Bidder's Bid.**

Question 25: What has been the average number of hours per week per patient in Baltimore County and Baltimore City?

**Response:**           **The average number of hours per week per patient in Baltimore County is 9.4 hours and for Baltimore City is an average of 10 hours.**

Question 26:           Do you have a contact name and number for completing the Minority Business portion of the Bid?

**Response:**           **Yes. Donna Foster, MBE Administrator at 410-767-8812 or Sherryl Gray at 410-767-7736.**

Question 27:           What if we don't have any job openings because we have enough caregivers already based on expected needs?

**Response:**           **Form Attachment R still must be completed.**

Question 28:           When you have an opening, whenever, in your company, that you're to contact DHR so that they in return can contact DHR so that they in return can contact us?

**Response:**           **See Hiring Agreement Attachment R. You will contact the Local Department of Social Services.**

Question 29:           If there are no suitable or qualified Temporary Cash Assistance Recipients?

**Response:**           **See Hiring Agreement Attachment R. You will receive a waiver so you can hire whomever you wish.**

Question 30:           Will we have an opportunity to view their work history as far as their attendance?

**Response:**           **Yes. The Department will only refer qualified candidate for any job opening.**

Question 31:           Is there something we can put online so we can track that we have complied with the requirements here or is this all going to be information that we're going to submit by mail?

**Response:**           **Currently the process is as follows: Your company is awarded a contract , your company will sign the Hiring Agreement (Attachment R) as well as the DHR Services contract for the services, our office will contact your company and welcome you and give you contact information as well as the forms that you will need should you have a need to hire. Those forms will be filled out and mailed or faxed.**

Question 32: If the local Department of Social Services identifies four people that were qualified. Are we required to hire someone from that pool or if we determine that they're not qualified can we go outside or get a waiver or how does that work?

**Response: You are not required to hire any person that our office deemed qualified if your company feels that they don't meet your Qualifications or you have a better qualified candidate. You only have to give us a reason as to why you didn't hire them.**

Question 32: The Welfare to Work tax credit for hiring long-term recipients can be as much as \$8500.00 per new hire, 35 percent of qualified wages for the first year and 50 percent of qualified wages for the second year of employment. Does this apply to you if you are nonprofit?

**Response: The tax credit does not apply to you if you are a nonprofit, but you still are required to participate in the hiring agreement.**

Question 33: Health insurance, if they're a veteran and we hold a VA contract, can we, help them to get the VA eligibility?

**Response: Yes. (You try to help them get whatever services they could use, but just let us know, because we don't want a duplication of services.)**

Question 34: The correspondence regarding who's the care recipient, can we inform you of their names via e-mail? Because some agencies, like the VA, you can't use their name or Social Security number in any e-mail correspondence. Can you do that with the state?

**Response: No e-mails. You can call but it must be followed up with a letter. We will be following the H.I.P.A.A. Regulations and Policy.**

Question 35: This contract is converting or leaving out home waiver into a Contract form?

**Response: This is not a waiver.**

Question 36: My question now is for those participating already and are delivering home waiver, because delivering home waiver is under the department of Human Resources. So if you don't get this contract, does that affect home waiver?

**Response: No.**

Question 37: But if you do get the contract and you have clients that are eligible for the waiver programs and can get a lot more hours through there, I guess its obligation to let you know if that would help them out?

**Response: Yes. If you do have a customer or client that we are currently serving and is on the waiting list, the Department must be notified of the waiver because we terminate our services.**

Question 38: Are there any addenda to this IFB that apply?

**Response: Yes. Check on eMaryland Marketplace or the DHR webpage [www.dhr.state.md.us](http://www.dhr.state.md.us).**

Question 39: Does the entire bid package have to have five copies or just the Bid Form (Attachment A and Attachment A.2)

**Response: The entire bid package has to be an original, to be so identified, and 5 (five) copies of each Bid. Each Bid must be submitted in separately sealed envelopes and include on the envelope the bidder's name, solicitation title, jurisdiction to be served and Bid Due Date and Time.**

Question 40: Will you need the resumes and certifications of the anticipated employees to work on this contract or would that be submitted after an award notice?

**Response: Refer to Section IV. Requirements for Bid Preparation, 4.6 Personnel. This section should include job descriptions and individual resumes for the personnel who are to be assigned to this project if the Bidder is awarded the Contract. Indicate the role or assignment that each individual is to have in this project. The Project Manager and any other key personnel identified in the Bid are considered to be essential to work being performed under this IFB.**

Question 41: We have never had a contract under the State of Maryland; however, we have subcontracted under a prime to meet MBE goals. Would that be ok to list as Past Contracts with the State of Maryland?

**Response: No. As a subcontractor, you were not a party to the contract between the Prime and the State.**

Question 42: Our business is for profit. Do we need to make a statement for not submitting Attachment P? Or do we still submit the form?

**Response: No. If you are for profit you do not need to fill out Attachment P.**

Question 43: What is the last date to submit questions?

**Response: May 22, 2009**

Question 44: Our company is a licensed RSA and nurse staffing agency with the State, should we submit a copy of both license with our bid?

**Response: You only have to submit the RSA license.**

Question 45: How many hour per week are anticipated for personal care services per client?

**Response: The number of personal care hours varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The average is 4-6 hours per week.**

Question 46: Qualification for the aides, are these just the qualifications you have listed here is all they need to meet? For instance you have the need to be a CNA and what if you have medication requirements, some of the clients, are they ever on medication?

**Response: We do not dispense medication. Section 3.2.B.9 lists tasks which Aides cannot perform under this Contract.**

Question 47: Once a client is hospitalized or institutionalized, our regulation says that we have five days, to get out there to reassess the case. If a client goes into the emergency room and comes back home, we do not have to go back out.

**Response: Yes.**

Question 48: If the client spends the night, 24 hours, then we have to go back out and reassess them?

**Response: Not according to our program.**

Question 49: The qualification for the CNA is for providing personal care.

**Response: Yes.**



Question 50: So chore services is not required for the CNA?

**Response: Yes.**

Question 51: Is this personal care service different for the Medicaid personal care program.

**Response: Yes. There are different levels of care provided by Medicare, by Medical Assistance personal care, level 1, level 2 and level 3.**

Question 52: Do CNA have to do personal care?

**Response: See response to number 49 above.**

Question 53: CNA can go into a house, still give personal care and do chores.

**Response: Yes.**

Question 54: Some of the vendors have a contract individually with a local Department on a yearly basis. The reason for this was that the original contract was for five years and they did not bid when that contract started.

**Response: They should now bid on the new contract.**

Question 55: Under what circumstances could you have a person in the home if they're not doing chore services or they're not a certified nurse assistant?

**Response: None.**

Question 56: So there will never be a PCA in the home, a personal care aide like under the waiver?

**Response: No.**

Question 57: Who are the consumers of this service? Who are the people that are qualified for these service?

**Response: The people who you would serve are customers of the local Department of Social Services. The majority of our clients are adults. It could be an Adult Protective Services case, SSTA (Social service To Adults) that's a**

**voluntary program where people have called into our agency and asked for help or where there might have been another problem where the social worker has identified that home care, in-home services would assist in maintaining them in their own home.**

Question 58: If you're only providing chore services can you send a CNA in?

**Response: Yes. If there are chore services only.**

Question 59: What is the minimum and maximum amount of hours?

**Response: There is no minimum or maximum hours.**

Question 60: I've experienced that sometimes with these contracts how does the workload get disbursed among the agencies fairly?

**Response: Assignments are given based on lowest to highest bid and availability. Experience and qualifications are other factors to consider.**

Question 61: How do we make ourselves known?

**Response: Every jurisdiction gets a list of the vendors and in what order to call. There will be a post award meeting to discuss the details.**

Question 62: If an agency has a contract with, for example, Baltimore County Health Department, are you saying that we can still bid for Baltimore County?

**Response: Yes. Because they're two different programs. You may be working for the department of Aging, Health department, some nonprofit providing services to us, waivers, this is totally separate from everything, everybody else, and we have different requirements than they do.**

Question 63: The amount of money that each jurisdiction has to spend on a yearly basis, is that something that's published and public knowledge?

**Response: No.**

Question 64: On the MBE form (Attachment H) there's a spot where you're suppose to write what your contract amount and then what 10 percent of that is. If you don't have a contract amount how do you

know what 10 percent of the MBE is?

**Response:** **See response number 15 above.**

Question 65: If Social Services ranked from lowest to highest, why would DSS use a vendor that is higher, especially if we are going through this process of bidding for the contract?

**Response:** **See response to number 60 above.**

Question 66: How do you know we don't have the capacity if they are not retested and tried?

**Response:** **Referrals will be based on qualifications and experience. It is up to Bidder to keep the Department informed of any changes.**

Question 67: I can understand the bidding process and that you're to have a pool of providers to be able to provide you with those kinds of services you need, but I'm just curious as to how do you always go to the first one, the lowest bid on your list for new clients, then if that lowest bid cannot perform you'll go down to the next one and then the next one? You probably get some kind of historical data and this lowest bid is not performing at all.

**Response:** **See response to number 60 above.**

Question 68: How do we figure out our bids?

**Response:** **This is fully loaded contract. All costs and expenses must be Included in the hourly rate for each category.**

Question 69: Is this going to be modify throughout the contract?

**Response:** **No modifications are anticipated for this contract. This is a five-year contract.**

Question 70: You don't have year one, two, three?

**Response:** **No. When you bid on this five year contract you are going to have to take into consideration what it will cost you in five years for the same services.**

Question 71: Criteria for caregivers obviously differ. For us they have to be bonded and insured, we provide workers' comp Social Security,

liability. Obviously we have to factor that into our cost. You have equal criteria. We have to have a fully screened, trained, reference-checked person going into the home. Do you have certain criteria that's in here as well?

**Response:** **No.**

Question 72: To make sure everybody meets it, even basic criteria?

**Response:** **All persons must have a criminal background check six (6) months prior to contract start..**

Question 73: In the IFB under the aide qualifications that you say prior to them starting they have to have a six-month background check. If someone new would come to you as a CNA and they're coming to you to apply, we always do background checks when they first come, but you would have to wait six months to place them on the case?

**Response:** **See response to number 72 above.**

Question 74: The living wage for Baltimore City and Baltimore County, the Level is \$11.72. If you factor in employment taxes, that will be like \$12.79 that's actually going to the CNA per hour. So what minimum bid any contractor can, can make to you before you consider that to be serious?

**Response:** **All Bidders must comply with the living wage requirements. The Bidders must determine what their costs are going to be. Therefore, there are no minimums.**

Question 75: We don't want to price ourselves out.

**Response:** **This question is unclear and no answer can be provided.**

Question 76: In reference to the living wage and trying to factor that it is a five-year contract. What is the anticipation for the rates changing for the living wage, is that going to be on an annual bump-up.

**Response:** **Rates are decided through the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations.**

Question 77: Is this done on an annual basis?

**Response:** **See response to number 76 above.**

- Question 78: Anticipating that the living wage has to be met, so the contract is a five-year contract, so in year three for instance we need to anticipate that living wage would possibly it going to \$11.95, \$12.00?
- Response: Yes. The bid should take into consideration the cost of living Increases.**
- Question 79: We also have to realize that we have to include the nurse, the RN assessment, original assessment and also for them to go back every 60 days, so that has to be taken into consideration.
- Response: See response to number 68 above.**
- Question 80: We're looking at a five-year contract and for the current providers, whatever the bid was five years ago and considering the cost of living where we are now, if I submit a contract, I mean a particular price range now, because I'm low you pick me and in five years period am I going to be able to survive looking at the cost of living? Because cost of living at any point in time in the clause of the contract is not, there's nothing talking about adjustment as far as that is concerned in the package that we got.
- Response: See response to number 78 above.**
- Question 81: When developing a contract , five years, I think cost of living should be factored in, cost of living adjustment should be considered in the package.
- Response: See response to number 68 above.**
- Question 82: How many contracts are you going to be awarding?
- Response: There is no set number. Contracts will be awarded to vendors that qualify.**
- Question 83: There is a statement in the IFB that you have to include all licenses. I know you need to include your HHA or RSA, but what about, do we have to include copies of all of our CNAs' RNS' licenses?
- Response: Yes, at the time of the bid.**
- Question 84: If you are submitting bids for multiple jurisdictions and there's a statement in here about economy and trying to be concise, do you have to include all of the supporting documentation with every

one, so three audited financial statements in every packet?

**Response:** **Yes.**

Question 85: There are five copies of all of those things.

**Response:** **Yes.**

Question 86: References can be up to three years old, but then it also says that they have to be sent in sealed envelopes along with the bids. Can we use references that are less than three years that aren't in sealed envelopes?

**Response:** **No. See response to number 24 above.**

Question 87: We just got our MBE. Do I still have to fill out those forms. Do I have to put in 10 percent to another MBE?

**Response:** **See response to number 8 above.**

Question 88: Where can we find the list of MBE's?

**Response:** **Maryland Department of Transportation website.**  
[www.mdot.state.md.us](http://www.mdot.state.md.us)

Question 89: Can you use a relative?

**Response:** **Only State certified MBE's can be used to meet the MBE goal.**

Question 90: If an MBE fails to complete MBE forms what should we do?

**Response:** **First, you must notify the DHR Project Manager of any problems or changes with MBE subcontractors. After notification to the DHR Project Manager you may also contact the DHR MBE Administrator.**

Question 91: If we have an RSA my basic question is does the company itself need to be MBE certified or just contracted with other companies who are MBE certified?

**Response:** **Your Prime Contractor does not need to be MBE certified, only the State certified MBE's can be used to meet the MBE goal.**

Question 92: Do we need to get a letter from them saying we do business with them?

**Response:**           **The MBE subcontractor must complete Attachment J, Subcontractor Participation Statement to indicate their willingness to do business with the Prime Contractor.**

Question 93:           Did you already mention the amounts of these awards, specific amounts for each one or is it just that we are bidding to get on your list?

**Response:**           **You are just bidding to get on our list, there is no guaranteed dollar amount with this IFB.**

Question 94:           I am submitting 3 different bid packages for 3 different jurisdictions. does that mean that I have to obtain 9 different reference letters or can I make copies of the 3 that I received and put them with each package?

**Response:**           **No. You can use the same letters for all 3 jurisdictions.**

Question 95:           Page 35 of subject IFB requires the submission of resumes of personnel. Do you need the resumes of all personnel (project manager, nurse, and other key personnel plus resumes of in-home aides) or just key personnel?

**Response:**           **See response to question number 14 and Section 4.6 of the IFB.**

Question 96:           Section 5.1 of Attachment "D", how do I compute the "Numerical Contract Amount Will Exceed Figure"?

**Response:**           **Attachment D is only a Sample of the Contract. This is not for you to complete.**

Question 97:           The MBE Attachment H, I am totally confused of what I am to locate MBE's to make a list.

**Response:**           **See response to question number 88 above.**

Question 98:           Clarify what it means by current balance sheet and successful financial track record. What the track record should comprise of? Is there a minimum dollar amount you looking for? An amount that we must meet to fulfill this requirement. Is it OK to provide personal financial statement. It will cost a minimum of \$5000.00 dollars to get an audited financial statement.

**Response:**        **See Section 4.9 Financial Responsibility and Stability**  
**This section shall contain information to show that the Bidder has the capacity in all respects to perform fully the Contract requirements and the fiscal integrity and reliability to assure good faith performance. Information that can be used to demonstrate requisite responsibility and stability include:**

- a) Audited financial statements (for Bidder only) for the past three years,**
- b) Dunn and Bradstreet report and rating,**
- c) Current balance sheet**
- d) Successful financial track record**
- e) Line of Credit from a Financial Institution approved by the State Treasurer, or**
- f) Evidence of adequate working capital.**

**Question 99:**        The solicitation has a 10% MBE goal yet there is no information or way to determine the actual total contract award per service provider. Therefore it is impossible for bidders to determine the amount of money associated with 10% of the award. When will the Department provide additional clarification and instructions? Please take in consider time for vendors to line up appropriate MBE's.

**Response:**        **See Response to question number15 above.**

**Question 100:**        What are the limits to subcontracting for administrative services?

**Response:**        **There are no limits on subcontracting for administrative services. However, there is no subcontracting allowed for direct services.**

**Question 101:**        Please clarify ownership issues related to MBE contracting?

**Response:**        **If the Prime contractor is a State certified MBE it must use another State certified MBE to meet the MBE goal. A MBE Prime Contractor may not use its own employees to meet the MBE goal.**

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